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ABSTRACT

In November 1983, the Boston School Committee approved the establishment of a promotion policy for students in grades 1 through 12. This document first introduces that policy and explores implementation plans. Second, a rationale is presented that cites six major reasons for the policy's creation: attaining equity, holding students to grade level expectations, targeting students needing special services, promoting student self-esteem, improving quality of instruction, and reducing grade retention. Third, standards for promotion are delineated for elementary school, middle school, and high school levels. Fourth, administrative guidelines define the students to be affected by the policy, conditions for individual reviews, and procedures for carrying out the policy. Fifth, implications for remedial programs and budgeting are outlined. Finally, essential prerequisites of the Promotion Policy are listed. Appendices enumerate middle school and high school graduation requirements and discuss legal implications of the policy, including the Boston School Committee's authority to adopt a promotion policy, constitutional considerations such as due process and equal protection, and State and Federal mandates regarding bilingual students and students with special needs. (KH)

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BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PROMOTION POLICY 1-12

Approved By:
The Boston School Committee
November 29, 1983
Kevin A. McCluskey, President

Robert R. Spillane
Superintendent of Schools

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Superintendent

I. Introduction

II. Rationale

III. Standards for Promotion

- A. Elementary School
- B. Middle School
- C. High School

IV. Administrative Guidelines

- A. Scope — Who Will Be Affected by the Policy?
- B. Conditions for Individual Reviews
- C. Procedures — How the Policy Will Work

V. Remediation and Intervention

- A. Elementary School
- B. Middle School
- C. High School
- D. Approaches at All Levels

VI. Budget Implications

VII. Essential Prerequisites of the Promotion Policy

Appendix A — Middle School Requirements

Appendix B — High School Requirements

Appendix C — Legal Implications

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

Message from the Superintendent

From the outset of my administration, I have been committed to the development of a citywide Promotion Policy that is based upon strong curriculum standards and a systematic approach to testing. As a result of our efforts over the past two years, curriculum objectives have been developed in major subject areas for all grade levels, and we have a grade 1-12 testing policy. The approval of this Promotion Policy by the School Committee on November 29, 1983 is the culmination of our efforts in this stage of the revitalization of curriculum and instruction in the Boston Public Schools.

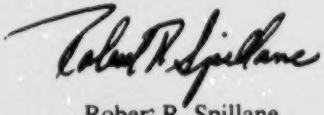
We now have standards and procedures which ensure that students are academically prepared to move from grade to grade and to graduate from high school with basic competency in reading comprehension, writing skills and mathematics. We can now fulfill our obligation to students and parents to ensure that our graduates possess the academic competencies necessary for higher education, for adult life, and for employment.

This policy has been developed to be strongly pro-student and is in no way punitive. It is a serious attempt by the Boston Public Schools to make certain that students have achieved basic success with the curriculum objectives and reading comprehension before they move on to the next level.

Student promotion will be based in part on the tests which relate directly to the curriculum objectives so that teachers have a clear idea of what is to be tested, and students are tested on what is being taught. It will also be based on an 85% level of student attendance and a specified score on the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP), which is a measure of reading comprehension.

The Promotion Policy will be in partial fulfillment of the requirements for grade-to-grade promotion and high school graduation. Comprehensive, remedial, tutorial and diagnostic procedures will be developed for those students who fail to achieve acceptable levels of performance as measured by tests. Finally, we will be reviewing and streamlining all of our testing and evaluation procedures to ensure that they integrate well with promotion policies and that they provide meaningful data to assist teachers with student diagnosis and instructional strategies. The true success of these policies will be the implementation in the classroom. Our teachers in Boston are among the best anywhere. Now, with strong curriculum objectives and promotion policies, we can assure greater growth in student achievement.

Sincerely,



Robert R. Spillane,
Superintendent of Schools.

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROMOTION POLICY

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the last two years, the Boston School Department has embarked on a major effort to introduce new curriculum standards and testing at all grade levels. There are now citywide curriculum objectives in most of the major subject areas (K-8 Reading/Language Arts, K-8 Mathematics, K-8 Science, High School English, High School Mathematics, and High School Science) and curriculum-referenced tests in Mathematics and Reading/Language Arts.

The curriculum objectives and testing are being supplemented by support activities at the school, district, and central level to support schools' efforts and insure the highest quality of methods and materials used to teach the objectives. The overall goal is the most effective possible linkage of objectives, teaching, materials, and testing.

Boston's recent curriculum efforts are based on a philosophical belief in the importance of high expectations—all children can learn—and a recognition that clear curriculum goals for each grade level are an indispensable part of the process of local school improvement. Our belief is that we will serve our students better if we state clear objectives, evaluate children fairly with respect to those objectives, provide early intervention and prevention services for students who are academically at risk, and remedial support for those who do not meet the standards.

A logical next step in Boston's curriculum strategy is the introduction of grade-by-grade promotion standards to supplement the curriculum objectives and tests, and the implementation of remedial programs for those students who do not meet the promotion standards. The purpose of the document that follows is to introduce the policy and explore implementation plans.

Current plans call for the policy to be phased in over the next three years. The 1983-4 school year will serve as a "dry run" to gather data on student achievement and make more precise budget estimates on the kinds of budget commitments that will be necessary. The 1984-5 school year will see the introduction of the attendance and curriculum-referenced testing standards, with the DRP test being used as a guide to discover which students need reading remediation. Finally, the 1985-6 school year will see the introduction of the DRP standards at fifth, eighth, and twelfth grade.

II. RATIONALE

Why is a promotion policy needed in the Boston Public Schools? There are six major reasons. The first has to do with simple equity. There are currently no uniform standards for the promotion of students from grade to grade. A single set of standards would bring about more equitable treatment of students citywide.

Second, a promotion policy is a way of holding students to grade-level expectations. A promotion policy linked to the new curriculum objectives can insure that most students have mastered the objectives of one grade before moving on to the next.

Third, a promotion policy can act as a catalyst for bringing services to students who are at risk. The process by which students fall further and further behind is a slow and insidious one, and becomes intertwined in a pattern of low expectations on the part of some educators. An effective promotion policy would *alert* students, teachers and parents when students are not meeting grade-level standards, and help *mobilize* extra programs and resources to help those students.

Fourth, a fair and well-designed promotion policy can help build the self-esteem of students by increasing their success in each grade. A promotion policy can thus be an important part of Boston's philosophical belief that all children can learn, and of each school's commitment to serve *all* its students. A promotion policy is an excellent way to convey higher expectations and restore meaning to students' grade-level designations.

Fifth, a promotion policy, coupled with the proper follow-through, can have a direct effect on the quality of instruction in Boston Schools. It should result in more students moving from grade to grade with the basic skills needed to experience success. This improved achievement can have a direct impact on the effectiveness of teachers by insuring that more students enter their classrooms with the skills and knowledge necessary to do grade-level work.

Finally, in the long run, higher standards, increased attention to students' needs, and improved instruction will result in fewer and fewer students being retained at each grade level, and more and more students graduating from Boston schools with the skills and knowledge they need to lead successful, productive adult lives.

III. STANDARDS FOR PROMOTION

All students will be evaluated with respect to four performance standards: report card grades, grades on end-of-year curriculum-referenced tests, attendance, and, at certain levels, DRP Test scores. below are the standards to be used in making decisions on promotion at each level. Students who do not meet the standards will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the principal/headmaster in each school with input from appropriate staff (see Administrative Guidelines in the next section).

A. Elementary School

1. A student must attend for 85 % of the enrolled days within each grading period to receive passing report card grades*.
2. A student must have passing end-of-year report card grades in Reading, Language Arts, and Math. End-of-year grades in each subject will be made up of five equally-weighted components: the four report card grades and the citywide final exam. Final exams must be taken on a student's assigned grade level (e.g., a fifth grader taking a Level Five Mathematics test) to count toward promotion.
3. A student may not have more than two failing grades in other subjects on the end-of-year report card.
4. To be promoted from the fifth grade, a student must attain a score of at least 38 on the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) Test in either grade 4 or 5.

B. Middle School

1. A student must attend for 85 % of the enrolled days within each grading period to receive passing report card grades*.
2. A student must earn 27 points each year to be promoted. (Points are earned when students receive a passing end-of-year grade in a given subject. Passing a major subject gives a student 5 points; passing all subjects gives a student 35 points.) End-of-year grades in each subject will be made up of five equally-weighted components: the four report card grades and the final exam. Final exams will be citywide in those areas where the Testing Office has developed curriculum-referenced tests, school-based in other subject areas. Final exams must be taken on a student's assigned grade level to count toward promotion (e.g., a seventh grader taking the Level Seven Reading/Language Arts test). In the eighth grade, the State Basic Skills Tests in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics serve as the year-end curriculum-referenced tests.
3. To graduate from eighth grade, students must have earned a total of at least 81 points** and have attained a score of at least 52 on the DRP Test at some point in middle school.

C. High School

1. A student must attend at least 85 % of enrolled days within each grading period to receive passing report card grades*.
2. A student must have accumulated the following point totals to be promoted from each grade:
   Grade 9-23 points
   Grade 10-49 points
   Grade 11-75 points

   Points are earned when students receive end-of-year grade in a given subject. Passing a major subject gives a student 5 points: passing all subjects gives a student 35 points. End-of-year grades in each subject will be made up of five equally-weighted components: the four report card grades and the final exam. Final exams will be citywide in those areas where the Testing Office has developed curriculum-referenced tests, school-based in other subject areas.
3. To graduate from high school, a student must obtain a total of 105 points**, and attain a score of at least 64 on the DRP at any point in high school.

* A passing grade is defined as 60 % or better on a curriculum test, quiz, classroom test, classwork, or homework.

** Refer to middle school and high school requirements in the appendix.

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PROMOTION POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Grade in School	Report Card Grades *	Points **	Test Scores: Remediation	Test Scores: Promotion/ Graduation	Attendance
1 2 3 4 5	Grades 1-5—pass end-of-year-report cards in Reading, Language Arts and Math. A student may have no more than two failing grades in other subjects on end-of-year report cards.	Point system not used in elementary schools.	80% on Botel Milestones, A and B 80% on Botel A B C D 80% on Botel A B C D E F 33 on DRP 38 on DRP	38 on DRP	For all grades 1 — 12 85% of the enrolled days with each grading period in order to receive passing report card grades
6 7 8	See middle school requirements in Appendix.	27 for promotion to grade 7 54 for promotion to grade 8 81 for promotion to grade 9	43 on DRP 48 on DRP 52 on DRP	52 on DRP	
9 10 11 12	See high school requirements in Appendix	23 for promotion to grade 10 49 for promotion to grade 11 75 for promotion to grade 12 105 for graduation	55 on DRP 58 on DRP 61 on DRP	64 on DRP	

*End-of-year grades will be made up of five equally weighted components: The four report cards plus final exams — citywide in those areas where Testing Office has developed curriculum-referenced tests, school-based in other subject areas.

** Points are earned when a student passes end-of-year grades in a given subject. Major subjects = 5 points.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

A. Scope — Who Will Be Affected by the Policy?

1. All special education students will be subject to the requirements of a satisfactory report card and at least 85% attendance for promotion from grade to grade. The Evaluation Team can make modifications in citywide promotion standards where specific handicapping conditions prevent individual students from meeting those standards. For example, deaf or severely dyslexic students may need to be exempted from testing standards; other 766 students may need modified testing procedures (e.g., using tests with large print or Braille, having tests read out loud, or taking tests in small groups). Any modifications of this kind must be written into a student's IEP, must contain specific language containing the rationale, must be approved by the principal/headmaster and parent, and is subject to review by the appropriate Senior Level Special Education Advisor.
2. All students in bilingual programs will be subject to the Promotion Policy. The Language Assessment Team (LAT) may decide to allow some bilingual students to substitute the ESL curriculum-referenced test (to be developed during the 1983-4 school year) for the Reading/Language Arts and English curriculum-referenced tests.
3. As a general rule, students will not be retained in the same grade more than once. Experience has shown that double retentions can lead to serious problems; these can be avoided by a policy of mobilizing additional resources to meet the needs of students who are still not meeting standards after two years in the same grade.
4. Because Kindergarten is a voluntary program, students will only be retained at this level if teacher, principal, and parents agree that it is in the child's best interest.

B. Conditions for Individual Reviews

Students who do not meet the standards for their grade level will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the principal/headmaster and other staff as deemed appropriate. In order to promote any student who does not meet the standards, credible documentation must be presented in one or more of the following areas:

1. Students whose illness or injury (documented by a physician) prevents them from meeting the 85% attendance requirement, and therefore from getting satisfactory grades, may be promoted if they earn passing grades (60% or above) on final exams and, in 5th, 8th, and 12th grades, meet the DRP test cut-off standard.
2. Students who have made exceptional progress (i.e., at least a year and a half of growth in one year's time as measured by standardized tests) but have failed to meet one or more of the requisite performance standards, may be promoted if the following questions can be answered affirmatively by the principal or headmaster: (a) Will such students, if promoted, be likely to meet the standards for promotion the following year? (b) Will promotion encourage such students to continue or to increase their efforts the next year?

3. Students in special education or bilingual programs for whom testing and/or promotion criteria have been modified and approved as a part of Individualized Education Plans or programs (see above).

C. Procedures — How the Policy Will Work

September — All those involved — students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the community — will be fully informed of the details of the policy each year by brochures given out to students and by an intensive media campaign, conferences, meetings, and other approaches through parent and community organizations in the opening weeks of school.

September-October — 766 Evaluation Teams and Bilingual Language Assessment Teams will decide early each year whether modifications in the policy are justified for any students, and obtain the proper approval for those modifications.

September-December — For students who are falling behind, there will be on-going remediation and notification of parents as to the specific areas of weakness.

December-June — As soon as poor classroom performance and/or attendance indicate that a student is in danger of being retained, each school is required to:
— Notify parents verbally or by a note as to the specific problems their child is having no later than December 15 (this involves drawing attention to report card grades that are unsatisfactory)
— Send a formal notice to the student and parents by the end of January
— Develop a specific plan for giving extra help for the remainder of the school year using all resources available in the school, home, and community by the end of February
— Maintain at least bi-monthly contact with parents for the remainder of the year to keep them informed as to their children's progress and involve them in the remedial program. (Standard citywide forms will be provided for the second, third, and fourth stages.)

June — Teachers in each school will decide which students will be promoted based on the standards outlined in the previous section. Students who do not meet the standards will be reviewed in each school by the principal/headmaster with input from appropriate staff. Final decisions will be made as to whether students should (a) be promoted because of extenuating circumstances, (b) be given the chance to earn promotion by going to summer school, or (c) be retained.

In the case of retained students, the school will decide what programs will be appropriate to meet each student's needs the following year, and will develop an instructional plan for retained students. This plan must address the following questions:
— What factors contributed to the student's retention?
— What are the student's strengths?
— What methods and materials are most likely to make the student succeed in the second year?

In the case of students who do not meet the standards for the second year in a row, the principal/headmaster and appropriate staff will decide whether to:

- Initiate the pre-referral process for possible placement in 766 programs (see Massachusetts Chapter 766 Regulations 315.0 and 315.1)
- Place the student in a remedial or alternative program
- Promote the student with certain provisos (involving additional support and resources)

Standard citywide forms will be provided to structure each school's educational plans for retained students, or students assigned to programs or activities for preventative purposes.

June — Parents who disagree with non-promotion decisions will have an opportunity to appeal to the principal/headmaster.

Summer — Summer school seats will be reserved for students who the principal/headmaster, in consultation with appropriate staff, feels have a reasonable possibility of attaining grade-level standards as a result of summer school work. Summer school for elementary students is planned for 1984-5.

September — As much as possible, retained students will be placed in programs (both during and after school hours) using alternative instructional methods and materials and smaller class size — all geared to meeting students' needs and raising the chance of success the second year. In elementary schools with only one class per grade, there must be an emphasis on providing different approaches and experiences.

V. REMEDIATION AND INTERVENTION

This policy has clear and substantial implications with respect to the provision of additional services to students who will find themselves unable to meet the standards it imposes. It is critical that the school system fulfill its obligation to provide effective teaching in each of its classrooms, and fully implement the curriculum objectives that will be established for all major academic subjects at each grade level by the end of this year. Once that has been accomplished, it should follow that progressively fewer students will require supplementary assistance in order to perform at levels required for their promotion.

We are now engaged in assessing each of the city's schools on a grade-by-grade basis to determine how many students are currently reading at two or more grades below level and might therefore be considered appropriate candidates for formal, structured remedial assistance. This analysis will include a breakdown of students in regular education, bilingual, and special education programs, and will also factor in those who are presently receiving Chapter I services.

A complete review of Chapter I is also underway. We are determined to find ways in which those services and resources can be made more broadly effective, so that they may be brought to bear on the educational lives of more of the children within our school system who are in need of the kinds of instructional supports that Chapter I is constituted to provide.

Remedial programs will be triggered by test scores and diagnostic reviews at each level. Specifically, if students score below certain cut-offs on the Botel Milestones and the DRP, special small-group instruction will become mandatory, whether or not students are to be retained.

A. Elementary School

At the elementary level, students who score under the target scores below will be required to enroll in small-group remedial reading classes:

— For grade 1 — 80% on each of Botel Milestones Sub-Tests A and B
— For grade 2 — 80% on each of Botel Milestones Sub-Tests A, B, C, and D
— For grade 3 — 80% on each of Botel Milestones Sub-Tests A, B, C, D, E, and F
— For grade 4 — 33 on the DRP Test
— For grade 5 — 38 on the DRP Test

Many long-range problems related to student achievement levels in our schools can be forestalled by improving the general quality of instruction in the early grades. We are, in the meantime, prepared to consider several approaches to intervention and remediation at the elementary level, among them:

— Early childhood education programs
— Extended Day Kindergartens for all students
— Transitional classes throughout elementary grades
— A cap on class size in grades K-3
— Additional support for students who are twice retained in the same grade
— Summer school for elementary students
— Remediation classes at certain grade levels at targeted schools

B. Middle School

At the middle school level, students who score below the following minimum DRP scores will be required to enroll in intensive small-group remedial reading classes:

Grade 6 — 43
Grade 7 — 48
Grade 8 — 52

The strengthening of middle school graduation requirements should intensify the focus on academics at this level. In combination with the full and effective implementation of the curriculum objectives which now exist for all major subject areas at the middle school level, this should produce long-term leavening effects on student achievement. Several direct and specific approaches to intervention and remediation will be proposed for application in our middle schools. They include:

— Expansion of the present sixth grade remedial reading program, so that students who are reading two or more years below grade level will receive instruction in smaller classes
— Self-contained classes for sixth graders who require intensive basic skills preparation
— Enlarging the Re-Cap Alternative Program, a successful model in which multiple repeaters in middle school are assisted in earning promotion to the next grade by mid-year
— Specially-designed summer academics to promote high school success

C. High School

At the high school level, students who score below the minimum level established for each grade must take an intensive small-group remedial reading course. The DRP minimums are:

Grade 9 — 55
Grade 10 — 58
Grade 11 — 61

The reconstituted high school graduation requirements establish standards that will promote greater stress on basic academic skills in most of the city's secondary schools. Curriculum objectives for each of the major high school subject areas will have been promulgated by the end of this year, and their full-scale implementation, particularly in the areas of English and Mathematics, will be a key component in our effort to upgrade the general quality of student performance in high schools.

In addition, an intensive focus on the instructional needs of students at their point of entry into high school, particularly in terms of basic skills remediation, is strongly indicated. This might include small classes and extra tutorial help for ninth graders whose DRP scores suggest the need for this kind of assistance. Alternative programs, such as Boston Prep and the Fenway School at English High, which have developed demonstrably successful organizational and instructional approaches that have resulted in measurable growth in the academic achievement levels of their students, will also be expanded.

D. Approaches at All Levels

Several approaches are currently being considered for use at all levels, among them:

- Specialized training for teachers designed to help them meet the needs of low-achieving students
- The purchase and use of appropriately individualized materials for students in need of basic skill remediation
- Increased use of mastery learning strategies for students requiring intensive skill development
- Use of peer tutoring
- After-school tutorial programs, staffed by school personnel and/or organized volunteers
- Greater parent involvement in the education of their children
- Use of innovative technology for remediation (computer, cable TV, etc.)
- New approaches to summer school at all levels. Presently, a summer school option exists only for middle and high school students who need to make up courses they have failed in order to be promoted from one grade to the next. This practice will be retained; in addition, classes will be more directly focused on remediation and support. Summer school will become a recommended option for some students, whether or not they may have failed a course, or need to acquire points for promotion.

VI. BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

One of the major tasks for the 1983-4 school year is to gather data on more effective uses of current programs and additional kinds of funding that will be required to deliver effective remedial services to students who are retained. Staff from the Office of Curriculum and Instruction and the Budget Office have already begun an analysis of the projected needs for remediation on a grade-by-grade and school-by-school basis. Below is a preliminary list of items that are already being assessed in terms of their cost implications:

1. After-school tutoring and remedial programs
2. Smaller classes for retained students
3. Alternative Programs requiring additional staffing in some schools
4. Summer school(s) for elementary students, and expansion of middle and high school summer schools
5. Teacher training for the special needs of remedial students
6. Materials for remedial classes, and individualized materials for remediation in regular classes
7. Special training for teachers in meeting the needs of low-achieving students
8. Different approaches to scheduling and staffing at the Kindergarten and early elementary levels
9. Extended Day Kindergartens
10. Targeting specific grades for extra assistance in reading and appropriate remedial support
11. Caps on class sizes in the early grades, transitional classes throughout the elementary grades
12. Early childhood education programs

VII. ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITES OF THE PROMOTION POLICY

A number of ingredients will be in place before July, 1984, each vital to an effective and equitable promotion policy:

1. Students and parents will be fully informed and, as much as possible, involved in the policy at all stages. This will include complete information on the promotion policy prior to implementation (with translations of the policy into the languages spoken by all Boston parents).
2. A revised time allocation policy will be implemented to insure that all schools are scheduling adequate time in each curriculum area.
3. The policy will build on the recently-adopted curriculum objectives for each grade level in Reading/Language Arts, English, and Mathematics. These standardized curriculum objectives will be the focus of instruction at each grade level, and will be measured by tests geared to the objectives.

4. Tests used will be valid measures of the curriculum that is being followed by Boston teachers and students.
5. The policy will stress the prevention of failure by establishing mechanisms that help schools set up an "early warning" system which identifies and brings remedial help to students who are failing to meet minimum requirements. This will include revised report cards which make students' progress on the promotion criteria clear, and test information at mid-year which can be used to identify students in danger of being retained.
6. Alternative programs and/or materials will be available for all students who are retained.
7. The promotion policy will avoid improperly placing students who are not educationally handicapped into special education programs; this will be accomplished by establishing alternative programs for retained students outside of special education.
8. Summer school programs and activities will be available at every level. These will be geared to raising students' achievement in the areas in which they are weak. A variety of alternative activities that occur outside of regular school settings must be considered.
9. As much as possible, students repeating a grade will be placed in different classroom settings using alternative instructional methods and materials and smaller class size (see following section on alternative programs). In elementary schools with only one class per grade, there will be an emphasis on providing different approaches and experiences.
10. The promotion policy should not result in resources being taken from students who are performing on grade level and above. All students will be challenged to achieve to their full potential.
11. There will be more effective coordination between regular education, bilingual, special education, Chapter I, School Improvement, School Based Management, Alternative Education Programs, etc.
12. There must be action to standardize report card periods at all grade levels.
13. Report cards will be revised to reflect students' progress on the curriculum objectives, and will include students' mid-term and final examination results side-by-side with teachers' grades.

APPENDICES

A) Middle School Graduation Requirements

B) High School Graduation Requirements

C) Legal Implications

APPENDIX A

MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

In order to graduate from middle school all students who attend Boston Public Middle Schools must fulfill the following requirements which constitute minimum standards. Standards will apply to students entering grade 6 in September, 1984 and be fully implemented by June, 1987.

Course instructions will be based on citywide curriculum objectives. All courses in sections I through V refer to major (5 point) subjects.

I. **English**

Students must take 3 years of English.

II. **Reading**

Students must take 3 years of Reading.

III. **Social Studies**

Students must take 3 years of Social Studies.

IV. **Mathematics**

Students must take 3 years of Mathematics.

V. **Science/Health**

Students must take 3 years of Science/Health.

VI. **Physical Education**

A. Students must take 3 years of Physical Education.

B. This requirement may be waived by the principal for those students who present to the nurse a valid doctor's note that recommends such a waiver.

VII. Other Courses — Every middle school must offer the following courses: **Art — Music — Foreign Languages — Industrial Arts — Home Economics — Computer Education**

A. Students must take a course in Art and Music between grades 6 and 8.

B. Students must take Career Exploration which includes courses in Industrial Arts, Home Economics, and Computer Education.

C. Students should be encouraged to take a course(s) in Foreign Languages between grades 6 and 8.

VIII. **Other Requirements**

A. Students must earn a total of 81 points.

B. Students must take a minimum of 75 credit hours in English, Reading, Social Studies, Mathematics and Science/Health. They must earn a minimum of 10 points in each course and a total of 60 points in these courses. Students must earn more points in science than in health.

C. Points for credit will be awarded on the following basis:

1. A class period will be a minimum of 42 minutes in length.
2. Yearlong classes will receive 1 point credit for every class period of instruction per week.
3. Courses which last less than the entire year will receive proportional credit.
4. The principal may award credit for supplementary programs up to the equivalent of time and preparation required in regular classes.
5. When a student completes graduation requirements in August, the student will be granted a diploma in September of that year.

D. Points required for Grade Promotion:

To Grade 7 — 27 points

To Grade 8 — 54 points

To Grade 9 — 81 points

E. Students who attended schools outside the Boston Public Schools may receive credit for those courses passed. Any applicable points will be awarded subject to evaluation by the guidance office and with the approval of the principal.

F. Bilingual students are required to abide by the same requirements for graduation as the standard curriculum students.

G. Special needs students will receive regular diplomas regardless of 766 prototype if they achieve the necessary points for graduation from the Boston Public Schools. Special needs students shall earn points comparable in number to those awarded in regular education or any subject(s) taken in a special education program provided that they fulfill the

requirements for earning points which are mandated for any Boston Public Middle School student.

Students in prototype 502.4 and 502.5, who are not able to achieve the necessary level of points should be given a certificate. This certificate should state the period of attendance at the middle school level and that the student has achieved the goals and objectives of the individual educational plan. This certificate should be awarded only after an Evaluation Team meeting with the student and/or his parents where agreement is reached to move the student from middle school to high school. This level change should only be recommended by the Evaluation Team and included in the individual educational plan when the following criteria have been met: student has spent a minimum of 3 years at middle school, his/her age, social, emotional and physical maturity are appropriate for high school and his/her lack of academic growth and achievement is related to a handicapping condition. No one of the above criteria is sufficient as the reason for a level change.

The above systemwide requirements are minimal. Individual schools may, therefore institute additional requirements for graduation provided that approval has been obtained from the appropriate Community Superintendent and the Deputy Superintendent for School Operations and Curriculum and Instruction and that sufficient advance notice is provided. Waiver of these requirements, if appropriate, will be granted with the approval of the Deputy Superintendents for School Operations, Curriculum and Instruction and the Superintendent of Schools.

APPENDIX B

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS

The following High School Diploma Requirements have been approved by the School Committee of the City of Boston for implementation starting with the graduating class of 1988. While this represents a strengthening of the previous requirements, it should be emphasized that these are only minimum requirements, and it is envisioned that they will be increased after further study.

In accordance with this policy, all students who attend Boston Public High Schools must fulfill the requirements listed in Section A in order to receive a diploma. All students who are in a College Course in the Boston Public High Schools must fulfill the requirements listed in Section B.

It should be re-emphasized that these are only minimum standards. It is anticipated that the arts and other elective subjects will be taken by students as part of their high school experiences.

SECTION A—Minimum Requirements for Diploma

I. **English**

All students must take and pass four(4) years (20 points) of English between Grades 9 and 12.

II. **Social Studies**

All students must take and pass two(2) years (10 points) of Social Studies between Grades 9 and 12. This must include five(5) points in United States History.

III. **Mathematics**

All students must take and pass two(2) years (10 points) of Mathematics between Grades 9 and 12. Both courses must be from the Mathematics Curriculum Objectives Guide. One of these courses must include Pre-Algebra objectives from the Mathematics Curriculum Objectives Guide.

IV. **Science**

All students must take and pass two(2) years of Science (10 points) between Grades 9 and 12. One(1) year (5 points) must be in a laboratory science course.

V. **Physical Education**

All students must earn four(4) points in Physical Education between Grades 9 and 12. Points will be waived by the headmaster for those students who present to the nurse a valid doctor's note that recommends such a waiver.

VI. **Health**

All students must earn two and one-half (2½) points between Grades 9 and 12.

VII. **Computer Science**

All students must earn two and one-half(2½) points in Computer Science between Grades 9 and 12.

VIII. **Fine and Cultural Arts**

It is strongly recommended that all students include courses in these areas, in their academic program, throughout their high school career.

IX. **Career Development**

It is strongly recommended that all students include courses in this area, i.e., Home Economics, Business, Practical Arts, Occupational Education, in their academic program, throughout their high school career.

X. **Foreign Languages**

It is strongly recommended that all students take two(2) years of a foreign language during their high school career.

XI. **Other**

A. All students must earn a total of 105 points. Points for credit will be awarded on the following basis:

1. A class period will be a minimum of forty-two minutes in length.
2. Yearlong classes with homework preparation will receive one(1) point credit for every class period of instruction per week.
3. Yearlong classes without homework preparation will receive one(1) less point credit than the total class period of instruction per week.
4. Courses which last less than the entire year will receive proportional credit.
5. The Headmaster may award credit for approved supplementary programs up to the equivalent of time and preparation required in regular classes.
6. Any student acquiring credits during the summer of the year he/she would have graduated will, upon completion of graduation requirements in August, receive his/her diploma in September of the same year.

B. Obtaining a score of at least 64 on the DRP test (obtained at any point in high school). This will be in effect for seniors graduating in June of 1986.

SECTION B—Minimum Requirements for Students in a College Course

I. **English**

All students must take and pass four (4) years (20 points) of English between Grades 9 and 12.

II. **Social Studies**

All students must take and pass two (2) years (10 points) of Social Studies between Grades 9 and 12. This must include five (5) points in United States History.

III. **Mathematics**

Students must take and pass three (3) years (15 points) of Mathematics between Grades 9 and 12. These courses must be Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II from the Mathematics Curriculum Objectives Guide.

IV. **Sciences**

Students must take and pass three (3) years of Science (15 points) between Grades 9 and 12. Ten of these points should be in laboratory science courses.

V. **Foreign Languages**

Students must take and pass two (2) years (10 points) in the same language. It is highly recommended that students enrolled in the College Course take three years of the same language.

VI. **Physical Education**

All students must earn four (4) points in Physical Education between Grades 9 and 12. Points will be waived by the headmaster for those students who present to the nurse a valid doctor's note that recommends such a waiver.

VII. **Health**

All students must earn two and one-half (2½) points between Grades 9 and 12.

VIII. **Computer Science**

All students must earn two and one-half (2½) points in Computer Science between Grades 9 and 12.

SECTION C—Additional Information

1) **The normal sequence** of study is four years. However, a student who plans to pursue a program leading to early graduation (i.e., at the end of three or three and one-half years) normally will make this known to his/her guidance counselor one or more years before the desired graduation date. The headmaster will make the decision of the feasibility of early graduation after a conference with the parents or guardians, student and guidance counselor.

2) Students will be allowed to earn points toward graduation at Boston Central Adult High School, only if by earning these points, the student is entering at least the fourth year of high school.

3) Points required for grade promotion:
   To Grade 10 — 23 points
   To Grade 11 — 49 points
   To Grade 12 — 75 points

4) **Students who attended** schools outside the Boston Public Schools may receive credit for those courses passed. Any applicable points will be awarded subject to evaluation by the guidance office and with the approval of the headmaster.

5) Bilingual students are required to abide by the same requirements for graduation as the standard curriculum students.

6) H.H.O.R.C. course students will receive graduation credits through courses successfully completed at the Hubert H. Humphrey Occupational Resource Center (HHORC). HHORC students will earn 7½ points per semester.

7) Special Needs students shall receive regular diplomas regardless of their Chapter 766 prototype if they have achieved the necessary points for graduation from the Boston Public Schools. The decision to grant a diploma should be written into a student's IEP which is signed by the Headmaster, and the 502.4 teacher should meet with the guidance counselor to determine the specific criteria and credits necessary in the case of each student for

whom graduation is being considered. Special needs students shall earn points comparable in number to those awarded in regular education for any subject(s) taken in a special education program provided that they fulfill the requirements for earning points which are mandated for any Boston Public High School student.

A) **SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT ABLE TO ACHIEVE NECESSARY POINTS FOR GRADUATION**

All special needs students enrolled in the Boston Public Schools who can achieve the necessary points for a diploma, and their parents, shall be advised of their rights under the provisions of Chapter 766 (c.f. reg. 207.1 and 207.2)

Students in prototypes 502.4 and 502.5 who are not able to achieve the necessary level of points should be given a certificate. This certificate should: (1) state the period of attendance at the middle school or high school level and (2) indicate that the student has achieved the goals and objectives of the Individualized Educational Plan.

This certificate should be awarded only after a conference with the student and/or the parents, where agreement is reached for the student's release from the Boston Schools prior to the student's twenty-second birthday. This release does not prevent any student from being awarded an equivalency diploma by the State of Massachusetts.

B) **BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS FUNDED UNDER CHAPTER 766**

The right to a high school diploma applies by law to students placed by the Boston School Department in an approved 766 private school.

Certain special education private schools award their own high school diplomas to students who have completed the school's graduation requirements. In cases where students who attend special education private schools request a Boston Public School Diploma, it is the policy of the School Department to award a Boston Public School Diploma to those students who have satisfactorily met the standards for graduation as defined in Paragraph I of this section. The private school course of study must meet the standards of Boston Public Schools' requirements and must be approved by the Boston Public Schools. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the private school to individually work with the Boston Public School's Department of Student Support Services in order to determine the specific standards required for approval and the credits necessary in the case of each student for whom graduation is considered to be an educational option.

For students attending an approved 766 private school who wish to accumulate credits toward a Boston Public School Diploma, a **Private School Transcript Form** is to be completed at the close of each semes-

ter of each year of attendance in the private school and returned to the Senior Level Advisor, Secondary Schools, Department of Student Support Services.

C) **PRIVATE SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA**

Some special education private schools award their own high school diplomas; in such cases, the above procedures need not apply.

The above systemwide requirements are minimal. Individual schools may, therefore, institute additional requirements for graduation provided that approval has been obtained from the appropriate Community Superintendent, the Deputy Superintendents for School Operations and Curriculum & Instruction and the Superintendent, and that sufficient advance notice is provided.

RANGE OF ELECTIVES

A full and comprehensive high school education encompasses more than the minimum requirements detailed in this context. Students also have a wide range of electives available to them that they should take advantage of during their high school career. The following is only a partial listing of these courses. Students should see the guidance counselors at their high school for elective offerings at their respective schools.

ART

Commercial Design
Drawing and Painting
Film

CAREER PREP. BUSINESS

Accounting
Data Processing
Keyboarding
Office Procedures
Word Processing

HOME ECONOMICS

Child/Family Development
Consumer Skills
Fashion Design
Restaurant Management

OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

Cooperative-Industrial
Humphrey Center

PRACTICAL ARTS

Construction
Drafting
Electronics
Machine Technology

ENGLISH

Creative Writing
Mythology
Women and Literature

HISTORY

Afro American History
Ancient History
World History

LANGUAGES

French
Spanish
Chinese

MATHEMATICS

Computer Programming
Consumer Math
Trigonometry

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Gymnastics
Swimming
Weight Training

SCIENCE

Chemistry
Geology
Oceanography

THEATRE

Acting
Dance
Playwriting

APPENDIX C

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Authority for a Promotion Policy.

Without question, it is within the authority of the Boston School Committee to adopt a promotion policy, establishing minimum standards for advancement, to provide for a system of accountability for education in the public schools and to ensure that each student in the system is afforded a similar educational opportunity, regardless of the school which he or she attends. Such a promotion policy furthers the School Committee's interest in improving the quality of the education it provides and in motivating students to strive for greater academic achievement.

In considering the legality of the proposed promotion policy, several recent court cases involving challenges to existing examination policies provide useful guidance. The validity of such test-for-diploma schemes, in general, was upheld recently by the United States Courts of Appeals for the Fifth and Seventh Circuits, the highest courts to have considered this subject, in the cases of *Debra P.* v. *Turlington*, 644 F.2d 397 (5th Cir. 1983), and *Brookhart* v. *Illinois State Board of Education*, 697 F.2d, 179 (7th Cir. 1983). The first case involved a challenge to Florida's requirement that high school students pass a functional literacy test as a condition to receipt of a diploma; the second case concerned the validity of a decision denying diplomas to handicapped students who had failed to pass a minimum competency test under Illinois' diploma requirement. While not disputing the right of the state to condition the receipt of a diploma on the passing of a test, the courts found the particular plans adopted by Florida and Illinois to be infirm in certain aspects. The opinions, as well as the decisions of several lower federal and state courts in other suits challenging test-for-diploma schemes, provide legal guidelines that should be considered in developing a promotion policy for the Boston Public Schools.

Constitutional Considerations.

A. *Due Process.* The courts that have considered the validity of test-for-diploma schemes have started by acknowledging that a public school student has a legitimate entitlement to a public education. Further, the courts have recognized that a student has a reasonable expectation of advancing from grade to grade and, ultimately, receiving a diploma if he or she attends school and takes and passes the required courses. A diploma represents a "property interest" and a "liberty interest," held by a public school student that is protected by the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. Denial of a diploma would have grave consequences for a student's employability and future life chances. Thus, any policy adopted by a school committee that could result in a student not being promoted or not receiving a diploma must meet the requirements of substantive and procedural due process.

B. *Equal Protection.* The courts also have held that public education, although not yet considered to be a "fundamental right" automatically triggering the

strict scrutiny of governmental actions under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, must be provided in a nondiscriminatory and fundamentally fair manner. Thus, decisions concerning whether to promote or to graduate students must be based on rational, nondiscriminatory factors.

C. *Application of Constitutional Principles.* In practice, these constitutional principles require that a promotion policy employ only standards that are valid indices of educational achievement. Standardized test scores, grades and attendance records are rationally related to a student's achievement and, thus, may reasonably be employed as standards for advancement and graduation.

To the extent that a promotion policy relies upon test scores, the tests must cover only material or skills that the students have been taught in the course of their classes and must not be culturally biased. Students may be tested only on what they have had an opportunity to learn in school, not on what a school committee determines they should know.

Any promotion policy must be made known to students well before its sanctions are imposed. A school committee may not change, at the eleventh hour and with no warning, the requirements that a student must meet to advance or to graduate. This is crucial with respect to special needs students, for whom sufficient notice is required to allow for the writing of Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) that provide for preparation and instruction to enable them to meet achievement standards.

A promotion policy may not perpetuate past purposeful racial discrimination. Vestiges of segregation, such as high suspension rates and additional busing burdens, may be found to affect the test and attendance performance of black students and, thus, present special obstacles to their advancement and graduation. If the use of test and attendance requirements has a disproportionate impact on one race, the school committee employing such standards must demonstrate that the disproportionate failure rate is not due to the present effects of past intentional segregation, or it must prove that the policy is necessary to remedy those effects. Thus, a United States District Court, in *Anderson* v. *Banks*, 520 F.Supp. 472 (D.C. Ga. 1981), has ruled that a test-for-diploma policy could not be applied in a formerly dual school system in Georgia to black students who had been exposed to past segregation, notwithstanding the fact that the present promotion policy was racially neutral.

Special Needs Students and Bilingual Students.

In addition to satisfying these constitutional requirements, a promotion policy must meet the mandates of state and federal law relative to special needs students and bilingual students.

In 1980, a New York State trial court, in *Board of Education of the Northport-East Northport Union Free School District* v. *Ambach*, (Motion No. 108, Special Term, Supreme Court, January 23, 1980), held that P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), does not necessarily preclude the use of a minimum competency test to determine whether or not a handicapped student will receive a diploma. The EAHCA requires a local education agency to provide a free

and appropriate education to handicapped students; it does not, however, require specific academic results. The award of a diploma is not necessarily part of a free and appropriate public education.

In the same case, the court held that the denial of a diploma to a handicapped student who had failed to pass a minimum competency test did not constitute a violation of §504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 504 requires that a handicapped student be provided with an appropriate education, but it does not guarantee that he or she will achieve the academic level required to pass a minimum competency test.

A promotion policy that affects special needs students will be subject to challenge, however, if it does not measure the educational achievement of those students by realistic standards based upon their individual capabilities. So too, with bilingual students, the promotion policy should ensure that the methods of measuring student achievement take into account language proficiences. Thus, bilingual students should be tested in their native languages until such time as they become sufficiently proficient in English that their test scores reflect what they have learned rather than how well they speak English.

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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